



# VOICE

■ vocational rehabilitation ■ disability determinations ■ independent living ■

## A Kind and Gentle Man

*By Virginia Stollings, Senior Counselor, Kansas City North VR Office*

As he entered the room, he reached for his wallet, preempting my first intake question. With a hand that trembled slightly, he handed me a well-worn piece of paper. "I need a job," he announced with his mild stutter. "Maybe this will help."

This was my introduction to Roger Amerine, age 53. I gently opened the fragile paper. It was a glowing letter of reference from a long-ago employer. I learned later that Roger had been fired by the employer because he could not do the work assigned to him as a home-security systems installer.

Roger has mental retardation. Initially, he had been hired by a small security company in Kansas City, and he was assigned to do small jobs around the shop. He performed well. But, when a large company bought out Roger's firm, there were no more accommodations, and there was no more work for Roger. Roger was left only with the letter that he still carries proudly.

From then on, Roger's parents kept Roger at home, where he assisted them with everything around the house. As they aged, they came to rely on his assistance, and Roger took pride in the valuable help he provided.

In time, Roger's father passed away. In 2003, his mother also died, leaving Roger her home and her life savings – a sum Roger believed would cover his



Chris Castlebury (left), vocational specialist with Tri-County Mental Health Services in Kansas City, helped Roger Amerine (right), former VR consumer, with his transportation needs and with obtaining services through assistance programs.

modest needs for about six months.

Roger was alone when we first met on Jan. 15, 2004, and he was afraid. He knew he needed work, but he didn't know how to begin. Roger didn't drive. He never learned to ride the bus. He didn't know how to submit a job application or how to find a job lead. He knew enough to go to the Missouri Career Center near his home, but he couldn't understand what they told him.

The career center staff referred Roger to me. I scheduled Roger for testing and made him eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation assistance as quickly as possible. Roger selected job placement services through Tri-County Mental Health Services Inc. His reason: The provider was located in the only public building Roger knew how to reach by bus.

Tri-County agreed to provide placement help with no wait. We were off and running, or so I ▸

## A Kind and Gentle Man *(continued from p.1)*

thought.

The trouble was that Roger's applications were turned down over and over again. The Tri-County staff worked doggedly. We brainstormed together repeatedly. We called in every favor we could think of from our collective reserves of IOU's. But, it seemed that no one wanted to take a chance on a mid-50s adult with mental retardation who hadn't worked in 20 years.

Through it all, Roger was, well, Roger: a kind and gentle man with a never-ending smile and an inspiring spirit of optimism. During those months of the roller-coaster job search, I often felt a sense of role reversal. It was Roger who motivated us to bounce back from disappointment, to keep working diligently and to warrant his faith in us.

Along the way, we tried to fill the gaps in Roger's primary needs. Chris Castlebury, his Tri-County job developer, helped Roger to apply for and obtain food stamps and Medicaid. She also helped him learn to navigate Kansas City's public transportation system near his home. Meanwhile, I assisted Roger to establish closer contact with his sister. She provided small amounts of financial help along the way, and she provided important moral support and a sense of family continuity for Roger. I also helped him to make connection with the area senior center where he found friendship, social activity and a source of additional referral information.

And through it all, Roger was, well, Roger: always on time for appointments, always looking sharp and always smiling.

Finally, Roger was hired. I was skeptical. It was a part-time custodial job, and I wondered if the hours were adequate and if his strength and stamina were up to the demands. Roger said, "I want to take the job." Chris provided intensive coaching. Roger was slow; he ran out of gas. But Roger overcame and thrived. He has been on the job since February

2005. During that time, he has learned the job well, developed the requisite strength and stamina, and shown all the reliability and loyalty we expected of him. He has also earned promotions, more hours and more pay.

I enjoy an unusual benefit in Roger's case. He is employed as a custodian in the building that houses the Kansas City North Career Center, which is my referral source. As a result, I get to see Roger on the job when I visit the building.

On one recent morning, I arrived at the career center early as the staff was beginning the day with a quick stop at the coffee pot. One worker carried a plate of cookies, which she deposited in the cupboard. "Don't anybody touch these cookies," she said. "They are for Roger."

The woman pouring coffee laughed and said,

"Then Roger is going to eat well tonight. I made lasagna last night and threw together an extra little pan for Roger. It is in the fridge."

She turned to me and asked, "Do you know Roger? He is our custodian. He's a wonderful man – the best custodian we ever had. And, he's always smiling!"

"I know Roger," was all I said. Inside, I was doing back flips of joy. Boy, do I know Roger!

Roger arrived alone and afraid that winter day when we met. He told me he needed a job. Today, he has a job, and he has much more. Roger is no longer alone. He has a sister who is in touch with him regularly. He has a gaggle of surrogate moms who spoil him shamelessly. He has freedom to move about the community via the bus. He has new friends at work and through the senior center.

Roger is no longer afraid. He has confidence that grows visibly each day. He has the opportunity to prove his independence and his worth as a worker. He has dignity, pride in a job done superbly and recognition from his boss and customers. Roger has a new life, new hope, and he still has that never-ending smile. ■



# voice

The VR Voice is your voice. Please tell us how your newsletter can best serve you. What would you like to see in upcoming issues? Call Lisa Sone at (573) 526-7010, e-mail her at [lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov), or send your ideas/comments to her attention at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

# VR Awards Innovation and Expansion Grants

**V**ocational Rehabilitation recently awarded two Innovation and Expansion (I&E) grants — one to Alternative Opportunities (AO) of Springfield and the other to Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) of Kansas City.

I&E grants are the result of a stipulation in the Rehab Act requiring a portion of VR funds to be utilized for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, especially individuals who are the most significantly disabled.

The Office of Administration requested grant bids from any Community Rehabilitation Provider or Supported Employment Service Provider that had a written agreement with VR. VR chose to focus the grants on expanding services to underserved populations and Hispanic individuals who are significantly disabled.

“Research and the Rehab Act show those from minorities have a disproportionately higher rate of disability than individuals who are not from a minority population,” said Tim Gaines, coordinator of development and consumer affairs.

The need to reach out to the Hispanic population was based on information from the state’s 2003 census data, which identified the Hispanic or Latino population in Missouri as 2.3 percent. VR’s successful employment outcomes for Hispanics with disabilities have been less than 1 percent for the last two years.

The I&E grants will run for a three-year period. During the first year of the grant, VR will award \$45,000 each to AO and JVS. The second-year award will be \$35,000 each, and the third year will be \$20,000 each. The providers are expected to supply in-kind money and services during each of the grant years. The goal is to have each provider self-sufficient in

three years.

AO will cover the counties of Lawrence, Taney, Jasper, Barry and McDonald. JVC will handle Clay, Platte, Jackson and Buchanan counties.

As required by the grants, both providers will work with local VR offices in providing the following services:

- outreach activities
- outreach and liaison services
- training with VR staff on cultural issues
- referrals
- advocacy
- interpreting services
- referral to local English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Each provider has bilingual staff members who will work with VR staff and Hispanic clientele as well as Hispanic communities.

The grants give VR the opportunity to increase the number of Hispanic clients engaged in existing VR services. ■

## Voice of our consumers



**I**n this section, consumers, partners/suppliers and division employees can voice their opinions, views or recognition of our division and staff. Some letters will be printed in their entirety while longer letters may only have excerpts printed. Consumers’ names are omitted to protect their confidentiality. All letters are subject to editing.

### Feedback received from a DD consumer

Dear Ms. Logan,

I want to thank you for all your help for our family. This has been a very difficult, but at the same

time rewarding, experience.

Everything that happened to us was totally unexpected. Mr. J had only taken off work four days in the last 10 years. He was checked out every year and was given a “thumbs up” every time. He gave blood every six weeks or so and was in great shape.

This was not something that we would have ever expected, but it happened. We have gained such knowledge and received so much help from people like you and from family and friends. It almost is overwhelming how good people have been to us, and we really appreciate it.

Mr. J and I have been married four years and were just starting to make some progress and plans for our future, and now those plans have been changed. But our life together is much sweeter because we do have a life together. Mr. J should have died given the circumstances, but he is alive, and for this I am forever grateful. I am also so very grateful for your patience and help through these troubled times.

Words don’t always convey the weight of our feelings, but please accept our gratitude for your help.

***Lynn Logan is a senior counselor with the Kansas City DD office.***



## **Feedback received from a DD consumer**

Ms. Schultz,

I would like to compliment you on one of your employees, Ms. Davenport. She made a very trying time for me much easier to cope with.

Since last July, I have had two surgeries and so much stress that I was put on medication for depression. I just could not stop crying. At the time I talked to Ms. Davenport, I was between surgeries, and it just seemed everything was going wrong.

I was so scared of the second surgery. I knew that I would not be able to sit or eat for approximately three weeks. She told me she could understand the stress and would just like to make a few suggestions.

She asked about my family and friends, if I had people I could count on. I said, "Yes." She said that I should try this: "Try to quit looking on the dark side. Always try to look on the bright side. Sometimes this is very hard to do, so concentrate on the things that did go well that day. Be thankful for family and friends that have been so supportive, and always take one day at a time."

She suggested reading funny stories or watching funny programs that would make me laugh. And, pray.

Also, after my second surgery, which caused me to spend so much time in the restroom it too was getting to me, I talked again to Ms. Davenport. She said, "Remember you are one day further along than you were yesterday." I told her I was in the bathtub so much that I felt like a dried-up prune. She laughed and said, "Think of yourself as a mermaid instead."

I would like to say to you

that if she is an example of how you train your employees, you should be very proud of yourself. I thought a lot about her advice, and I just wanted you to know how much she helped me with her attitude and advice.

***Tereasa Davenport is a counselor and Danielle Schultz is district supervisor in the St. Louis South DD office.***

## **Feedback received from a VR consumer**

I am writing this letter in recognition of Mr. Steve Starr. I receive Social Security disability benefits, and I am currently participating in the Ticket to Work program. In working with your agency, Mr. Starr was assigned as my counselor.

Through his assistance, I have begun a transformation in my life that compares to no other. His patience, wisdom, guidance and support have given me the courage to undertake a challenge that will lead to my financial independence. He supplied the tools I needed to develop a career path that I could realize with my limitations. Also, his leadership uncovered my potential – the most important element for this program to be successful.

Mr. Starr has inspired me to do my best, and my gratitude is, and will be, reflected in my performance.

***Stephen Starr is a senior counselor in the St. Louis West/Transition VR office.***

## **A letter that VR Central Office received from a consumer**

I am a former client of the Vocational Rehabilitation program in Missouri. I would like to let the people in charge of the program

know just how much the program changed my life.

I was a ward of the state for six years, from age 12 to age 18, though I was left in the physical custody of my mother. I grew up in a tiny town with a very small high school. My peers reminded me every day, in every way that they possibly could, that I didn't have a chance to do anything after high school besides work in a factory — if I could hold down a job at all. They tried to make me believe that since I was raised on child-support checks, welfare and food stamps, I would have to settle for that for the rest of my life.

They might have been right if not for Vocational Rehabilitation.

In the fall of 1998, with the help of my Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, I entered college at Missouri Southern State College (now Missouri Southern State University) in Joplin, Mo. I kept a high GPA throughout. All of my professors encouraged me to go on with my education and come back to teach.

I am currently engaged in acquiring my master's in English on my way to a Ph.D. I have even won a position as a graduate teaching assistant (I teach Expository Writing I and II). I wouldn't be where I am without the aid of the Vocational Rehabilitation program of Missouri. This program helped me turn myself from a drain on the taxpayers into a taxpayer myself. Out of all the programs designed to help those who don't have the money to help themselves, this one is the one I would be the most proud to help fund. This program works.

Thank you for your time. And thank you for your help.

***Becky Arthur is a senior counselor in the Joplin VR office.***

## Employee Changes – June 2005 through Feb. 2006

### Promotions

**Sharon Belt**, a director at Central Office DD, promoted to hearing officer and transferred to the Jefferson City DD office

**Karla Bunch**, an assistant district supervisor, promoted to district supervisor in the Joplin VR office

**Kimberly Conrad**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Springfield North VR office

**Scott Crane**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City DD office, promoted to district supervisor and transferred to the Kansas City DD office

**Michelle Dixon**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Wayne Gillam**, director of Claimant Services at Central Office DD, promoted to DDS administrator

**Laura Higbee**, an assistant district supervisor, promoted to hearing officer in the Kansas City DD office

**Bridget James**, an administrative assistant I, promoted to computer information technician trainee in the St. Louis South DD office

**Harriet Jones**, a secretary II, promoted to secretary III in the Florissant DD office

**Kim Kaemmerer**, a senior counselor, promoted to quality assurance specialist in the St. Louis South DD office

**Anita Michel**, district supervisor of the Springfield North VR office,

promoted to regional manager while also retaining district-supervisor duties

**Kandace Moore**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the St. Louis West/Transition VR office

**Rodney Petersen**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Farmington VR office

**Michelle Scherer**, district supervisor of the Cape Girardeau DD office, promoted to regional manager, and then promoted to director of Claimant Services at Central Office DD

**Elizabeth Smith**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office

**Carol Tenholder**, a senior counselor, promoted to assistant district supervisor of the Cape Girardeau DD office

**Mary White**, an assistant district supervisor, promoted to district supervisor of the Cape Girardeau DD office

### New Hires

**Deanna Babcock**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Romney Edwards**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Diane Freppon**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Cynthia Hargrave**, a secretary I in the Kansas City North VR office

**Rebecca Helm**, a counselor in the Rolla VR office

**Michelle Johnson**, a counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Paula Landry**, a counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Paul Lossman**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Jim McGowin**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Terrilynn Shannon McNear**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Karen Miller**, a secretary I in the Hannibal VR office

**Joanne Moses**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Katherine Nelson**, a secretary I in the Farmington VR office

**Brooke Poskin**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Jacquette Smith**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Robyn Temple**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Sandra Wilhoit**, a counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Maria Willson**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Jenny Yinger**, a counselor in the Kansas City Transition VR office

**Julie Yonker**, a counselor in the Kansas City DD office

### Transfers

**Jane Boone**, district supervisor, transferred to hearing officer in the Florissant DD office.

**Beverly Lee**, a computer information technician trainee, transferred to billing specialist II in the St. Louis South DD office.

## Transfers

**Pinkney Newell**, a regional manager, transferred to director of Program Development at Central Office DD.

**Nola Townley**, a senior DD counselor in the Jefferson City office, transferred to the St. Louis South DD office.

## Resignations

**Faith Anderson**, a senior counselor in the St. Joseph VR office

**Gwendolyn Bailey**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Cynthia Bausola**, a secretary I in the St. Louis West/Transition VR office

**Kathy Burleson**, a secretary in the Columbia VR office

**Lora Coffman**, an assistant district supervisor in the Kansas City DD office

**Christy Coons**, a secretary I in the Hannibal VR office

**Frank Winn Diekroeger**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City Transition VR office

**Beverly Dotson**, a senior counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Judy Dunn**, a secretary II in the St. Louis West/Transition VR office

**Matthew Ferris**, a senior counselor in the Florissant DD office

**James Foster**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Matt Haeffner**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City DD office

**Mercedes Harris**, a secretary I in the Florissant DD office

**Derese Herndon**, a counselor in the Jefferson City DD office

**Joy Hershberger**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Bonnie Keller**, an accountant III in Central Office DD

**Kelly Landre**, a senior counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Deitra Marambi**, a counselor in the Springfield DD office

**Cecil JoAnn Martin**, a senior counselor in the Springfield South VR office

**Michelle Mason**, a senior counselor in the Sedalia VR office

**Linda McClure**, a billing specialist II in the Springfield DD office

**Brenda McGee**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City VR office

**Tessa Michaud**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Elizabeth Page**, a senior counselor in the Springfield DD office

**Shannon Powell**, a senior counselor in the Springfield DD office

**Allison Rubin**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Nancy Scherer**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Michael Slater**, a counselor in the Springfield DD office

**Darin Stageberg**, a senior counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office

**Matt Staples**, a senior counselor in the Columbia VR office

**Andrea Steiner**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Angela Stekr**, a counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Jean Underberg**, a senior counselor in the Cape Girardeau DD office

**Alice Varalli**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office

**Shelly Vertin**, a senior counselor in the St. Joseph VR office

## Retirements

**Alta Harris**, a secretary III in the Farmington VR office, retired Oct. 31, 2005, after more than 28 years of service.

**Eunice Harris**, DDS administrator in Central Office, retired Dec. 31, 2005, after more than 23 years of service.

**Vicki Hicks**, a secretary III in the Poplar Bluff VR office, retired June 30, 2005, after more than 30 years of service.

**Tony Logan**, district supervisor of the Joplin VR office, retired Aug. 31, 2005, with 27 years of service.

**Penny Murphy**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City DD office, retired Jan. 31, 2006, after 31 years of service.

**Lyman Trachsler**, director of Field Operations located in the Sedalia VR office, retired Oct. 31, 2005, after more than 21 years of service.

**Debra Tyberendt**, a quality assurance specialist in the St. Louis South DD office, retired Dec. 31, 2005, after more than 27 years of service.



# MADE Honors DD Employees

The Missouri Association of Disability Examiners (MADE) held its annual conference last June at the Clarion Hotel in Springfield. During the conference, five DD employees were honored.



Pam Goodin (left), administrative assistant I in the Cape Girardeau DD office, was presented MADE's Director's Award by former DDS Administrator Eunice Harris (right). The award honors and recognizes "an outstanding member of the support staff who demonstrates work performance efficiency and characteristics which contribute to the efficient operation of the unit and the morale of coworkers." Goodin also received the Great Plains Regional Director's Award.



Patrice Proehl-Burnett (right), senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office, was presented MADE's Rookie of the Year Award by former DDS Administrator Eunice Harris (left). The award is given to "honor and recognize a disability professional who has made a significant contribution on a local, regional and/or national level to NADE (National Association of Disability Examiners)." Proehl-Burnett also won the Great Plains Regional Rookie of the Year Award last April.

Melissa Hunter (left), senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office, was presented the Missouri NADE Award by former DDS Administrator Eunice Harris (right). The award honors and recognizes the "disability professional of the year who has made outstanding contributions not only to the service of the claimant in accordance with his/her expertise but has contributed substantially of his/her time and talent to promote harmonious and more effective working relationships among his/her professional community." In addition, Hunter received the Great Plains Regional NADE Award last April.



Congratulations to our co-workers on their outstanding achievements!

Lecia Mikle (not pictured), assistant district supervisor in the Kansas City DD office, received MADE's John Gordon Award in June and NADE's John Gordon Award last September. The awards are presented to a supervisor in the disability program and are "designed to honor and recognize superior performance in a supervisory capacity."

Claudia Van Oostrom (not pictured), assistant director in the Cape Girardeau DD office, received MADE's Frank Barclay Award in recognition of her "exceptional ability to motivate and challenge or to develop or promote programs which motivate and challenge others toward personal and professional growth/human resource development."

## Service Awards

We are fortunate to have so many talented and inspirational co-workers. Please take a moment to recognize and congratulate the following staff for years of dedicated service to our division.

### Five Years

**Brenne Ardrey**, senior counselor, St. Louis North VR office

**Dan Baker**, senior counselor, Hannibal VR office

**Barbara Collaso**, senior counselor, St. Louis Downtown VR office

**Abigail Cooke**, senior counselor, St. Louis South DD office

**Christine Cruzen**, senior counselor, St. Louis South DD office

**Jie Downing**, senior counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Georgetta Fisher**, secretary II, Kansas City DD office

**Pamela Gerlach**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Timothy Gravier**, assistant district supervisor, St. Louis West/Transition VR office

**Shani Greenberg**, senior counselor, Florissant DD office

**Martha Jean Gruetzemacher**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Peggy Hart**, secretary III, Kansas City Transition VR office

**Maureen Hentz**, senior counselor, St. Charles VR office

**Sue Higgins**, senior counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Melissa Hillig**, senior counselor, St. Louis West VR office

**Jennifer Howe**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Melissa Hunter**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Kelly Johnson-Derossett**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Harriet Jones**, secretary III, Florissant DD office

**Kathy Kelly**, senior counselor, Jefferson City VR office

**Ellvan Markley**, senior counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Diana Moresi**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Martha Skinner**, secretary II, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Tracey Snyder-Miller**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Leslie Stanley**, senior counselor, Chillicothe VR office

**Dana Taylor**, professional relations officer, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Rachelle Teague**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Charolette Thieme**, secretary III, Kansas City Downtown VR office

**Kevin West**, senior counselor, St. Joseph VR office

### 10 Years

**Kelly Flaughner**, coordinator, Independent Living Services, Central Office VR

**Pamela McCarron**, senior counselor, St. Joseph VR office

**Louella McNeill**, senior counselor, Farmington VR office

**Janis Miller**, district supervisor, St. Charles VR office

**Jim Patterson**, senior counselor, Springfield North VR office

**Joan Read**, senior counselor, Columbia VR office

**Judy Seltzer**, senior counselor, St. Louis West/Transition VR office

**Laura Wallen**, senior counselor, Sedalia VR office

**Marva Wright**, senior counselor, St. Louis North VR office

### 15 Years

**Mark Bernskoetter**, assistant district supervisor, Springfield DD office

**Toby Eckert**, district supervisor, St. Louis South VR office

**Deena Exler**, quality assurance specialist, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Debra Frawley**, secretary III, St. Louis South VR office

**Mary Hanson**, senior counselor, St. Joseph VR office

**Scott Mantooth**, human resource manager, Central Office VR

**Carolyn Strautmann**, secretary II, St. Louis South VR office

**Emma Thompson**, secretary II, St. Louis North VR office

### 20 Years

**Maurisa Ahlstrand**, secretary II, Springfield North VR office

**Beth Butler**, billing specialist II, Central Office DD

**Martha Even**, administrative assistant II, Central Office VR

**Kathleen Johnson-Newby**, senior counselor, St. Louis Downtown VR office

**Anita Michel**, regional manager and district supervisor, Springfield North VR office



## Service Awards

### 20 Years

**John Ryan**, supervisor of Workforce Development/Ticket to Work, Kansas City East VR office

**Valerie Schneider**, secretary III, Florissant DD office

### 25 Years

**Jo Ann Conrad**, hearing officer, Springfield DD office

**Bob Lemmon**, senior counselor, Farmington VR office

### 30 Years

**Theresa Dudenhoeffer**, computer information technician, Central Office IT

**Cynthia McKenna**, secretary III, Kansas City DD office

## Staff Achievements

**Emily Borgel**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis West/Transition VR office, became a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor in January 2006.

**Keri Edwards**, a senior counselor in the Sedalia VR office, became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in February 2006.

**Peggy Ottersbach**, a senior counselor in the St. Charles VR office, passed her National Board Certified Counselor (NBCC) exam in July 2005.

**Denise Weaver**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City VR office, became a Licensed Professional Counselor in August 2005 and passed her NBCC exam in October.



## Workforce Excellence Award Winner



Yvonne Wright, district supervisor of the St. Joseph VR office, took home honors from the 23rd Annual Governor's Conference on Workforce Development last October at Tan-Tar-A Resort, Lake Ozark. Wright is a member of the Northwest Skills Gap Planning Consortium that joined forces with the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center to develop a workforce gap analysis needs assessment for the Northwest Workforce Investment Board. The two groups received the Workforce Excellence Award for "outstanding efforts in innovation in economic development." Congratulations!

## Mission Champion Award Winners

The Mission Champion Award recognizes exemplary employees who go above and beyond the agency's mission. The award is based upon the employee assisting other staff, consumers and/or partners and exceeding the agency's mission in the areas of customer service, employment outcomes, case management or other services as deemed appropriate.

### June 2005

|               |                              |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Raymond Drake | District Supervisor          | Nevada VR                    |
| Gail Purnell  | Secretary I                  | St. Louis West/Transition VR |
| Pam Schleif   | Administrative Assistant III | VR West Regional Office      |

### July 2005

|                |                             |                   |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Patti Hill     | Administrative Assistant II | Central Office VR |
| Donna Schepers | Human Resource Analyst III  | Central Office VR |
| Lisa Sone      | Quality Manager             | Central Office VR |

### August 2005

|                 |                  |                |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Richard Allen   | Senior Counselor | Springfield DD |
| Allison Wilfong | Secretary I      | Farmington VR  |

### September 2005

|                 |                  |                         |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| David Showalter | Senior Counselor | Kansas City Downtown VR |
| Elaine VanGels  | Secretary I      | St. Charles VR          |

### October 2005

|                |                     |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| John Arellin   | Senior Counselor    | St. Joseph VR       |
| Melissa Gentry | Secretary III       | Kansas City East VR |
| Yvonne Wright  | District Supervisor | St. Joseph VR       |

### December 2005

|             |                  |                      |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Stacy Brady | Senior Counselor | Kansas City North VR |
| Susan Henry | Senior Counselor | Springfield DD       |

# VR Receives In-Service Training Grants

**V**ocational Rehabilitation has been awarded two discretionary grants from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education. Both grants run for a five-year term from 2005 to 2010. VR submitted two applications for In-Service Training grants — one for a Basic Award and another for a Quality Award.

The Basic Award will fund a project intended to improve successful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities by providing staff development activities. The project's goals are to improve quality rehabilitation services, enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen partnerships.

To meet the goals, VR will provide training workshops, skill-building activities, specialized training and partnering with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

The focus of the Quality Award is "enhanced employment outcomes for specific populations." VR's goal is to improve successful outcomes for individuals with disabilities from Hispanic backgrounds.

The goal of this award is similar to the goal of the I&E grants recently awarded to Alternative Opportunities and Jewish Vocational Services. VR will recruit two part-time, bilingual rehabilitation technicians to work with staff on training issues and to act as liaisons to Hispanic communities.

Additionally, the technicians will assist with I&E grant activities. The Quality Award grant, not case-services funds, will finance the new technician positions.

Scott Mantooth, human resource manager, is the project director for the grants.

The **VR Voice** is published by the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a division of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**D. Kent King**, Commissioner of Education

**C. Jeanne Loyd**, Assistant Commissioner,  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

For additional copies or to submit materials, contact:

**Lisa Sone**  
**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**  
**3024 Dupont Circle**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65109**  
**Phone: (573) 526-7010**  
**TTY: (573) 751-0881**  
**Fax: (573) 751-1441**  
**E-mail: [lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov)**



Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
*Making a positive difference through education and service*

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Title IX Coordinator, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-751-4212.

